



We should be feeling very sleepy, considering flood of sleep aids

By Laura Petrecca, USA TODAY

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Sunday brought another small setback for the sleep-deprived: the loss of an hour to snooze when clocks jumped forward an hour for daylight-saving time.

Americans can use all the help that they can get when it comes to shut-eye. U.S. adults average just 6.9 hours of sleep a night, according to the National Sleep Foundation's 2005 Sleep in America Poll. The group recommends seven to nine hours.

"There are many demands on our time today, and sleep is one of those things that just isn't the highest priority," says Michael Twery, director of the National Center on Sleep Disorders Research.

Up to 70 million Americans cope with sleep disorders or chronic sleep loss, according to a guide about healthy sleep from the National Institutes of Health.

That big problem for millions of consumers has "become a gold rush," for marketers, says Howard Courtemanche, CEO of Health@JWT, a unit of ad agency JWT that specializes in health care marketing.

Companies now hawk everything from prescription sleep medication to relaxing room sprays:

•**Mood music.** Sleep Garden sells *zMusic*, a 60-minute CD of music it calls "the sound way to sleep." Rhino Entertainment and Smash Arts have a CD of classical music titled *Bedtime Beats: The Secret to Sleep*.

•**Body care products and room scents.** In February 2006, Unilever's Dove unit launched the Dove Night line, which includes body wash and lotion. Dove bills the products as a way to "destress the mind and body to ease women into a more restful night's sleep."

Ascendia Brands' Healing Garden has a line of zzzTherapy Sleep Well products such as Drift Away Powdered Milk Bath and Serene Dreams Pillow & Room Spray.

•**Beverages.** Last week, Dreamerz Foods announced the national launch of three "dessert drinks" — Chocolate S'Nores (milk chocolate), Vanilla Van Winkle (French vanilla) and

Crème de la REM (dark chocolate mint) — that have the active ingredients melatonin and lactium to "help with sleep and relaxation," says company CEO Amanda Steele.

•**Pharmaceutical sleep aids.** In 2006, consumers spent \$3.6 billion on prescription sleep medications, up 29% from 2005, according to health care and pharmaceutical consulting company IMS Health. It reports that more than 48 million sleep-aid prescriptions were written last year.

Ambien and Lunesta are two of the biggest sellers, but Takeda Pharmaceuticals North America's sleep-aid Rozerem is vying for a share of the market.

Rozerem's quirky ads show dream characters, such as Abraham Lincoln and a beaver, telling a sleepless man they miss being in his dreams. The offbeat approach was needed to stand out, says Marshall Ross, chief creative officer at Rozerem ad agency Cramer-Krasselt. "We had two very large, entrenched competitors spending much more than we ever could have."

In 2006, Sepracor's Lunesta spent \$298 million on advertising, and Ambien, from Sanofi-Aventis, spent \$207 million, according to TNS Media Intelligence. Rozerem spent \$102 million.

The idea for ads about dreams came from market research and focus groups, says Rozerem marketing director Chris Benecchi. "Consumers said, 'I'm an insomnia sufferer, and I miss my dreams.' "

Takeda considered a variety of wacky characters, from historical figures to superheroes, but Lincoln and the beaver tested "remarkably well," he says.

About 12% of adults surveyed by Ad Track, USA TODAY's weekly consumer poll, say they like the Rozerem ads "a lot." That's low compared with the Ad Track average for all ads of 20%, but good for drug ads, which typically score low with consumers for likability. While just 11% rated the ads "very effective," 52% found them "somewhat effective."

Both Ross and Benecchi say they are pleased with the Ad Track results, given the challenges of making drug ads that are interesting and also comply with Food and Drug Administration regulations for the ads, Benecchi says. "We have ... to make sure the public is aware of any safety concerns. So we have to accommodate for that in the (ad's) 60 seconds."

Adds Ross: "It's a communications challenge. It's not easy to say precisely what you want to say, and a large percentage of your commercial will be filled with the kinds of things that don't make for very likable conversation, like the possible side effects of the drug."